

Allegheny Defense Project trying to stop logging projects

PITTSBURGH — In light of a recent successful appeal, the Allegheny Defense Project is calling on the U.S. Forest Service to stop logging operations approved since Feb. 2, 2007, for the Allegheny National Forest.

Citing damage from oil and gas drilling to air quality, the Project successfully appealed March 28 the Service's approval of timber sales from the South Branch Kinzua Creek.

On April 24, Marienville District Ranger Rob Fallen withdrew approval stating a review was needed to ensure that the logging met the Forest Service Chief's goal of protecting surface, water and air resources in ANF.

Consequently, Defense Project officials assert that no timber sale approved since the new ANF management plan went into effect has properly assessed the impact of logging in conjunction with any impact of increasing oil and gas drilling in the forest.

"Until the Forest Service reconciles how it will regulate oil and gas drilling on the Allegheny, its logging proposals have to take a back seat," said Ryan Talbott, ADP forest watch coordinator.

Project members want the Forest Service to withdraw and refrain from issuing decisions on the following timber sales: Brush Creek; Southwest

Reservoir; Bobb's Fork Queen; Brush Hollow Salvage; FY 07 Regeneration; Mead's Mills and Ritts Salvage timber sales. That would affect at least 24 million board feet of timber, or nearly half of the allowable annual sale quantity of timber in ANF.

For instance, the Mead's Mill Project proposes to log more than 1,000 acres on the south side of the Allegheny River near Warren. ADP officials said more than 1,000 oil and gas wells have been drilled in the area, and there are hundreds of miles of roads, most of which were built by the oil and gas industry.